AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS:

The listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

1. (original) A method for activating at least one vascular endothelial growth factor selected from the group consisting of VEGF-C and VEGF-D, comprising treating said at least one vascular endothelial growth factor with a serine protease.

2. (original) A method according to Claim 1, wherein the serine protease is plasmin.

3. (original) A method according to Claim 1, wherein said at least one vascular endothelial growth factor is in an unprocessed form or a partially processed form.

4. (original) A method according to Claim 1, wherein said vascular endothelial growth factor is VEGF-D.

5. (original) A method according to Claim 1, wherein said vascular endothelial growth factor is VEGF-C.

6. (currently amended) A method for screening for a protease that activates at least one of VEGF-C or VEGF-D, wherein said VEGF-C or VEGF-D has at least ~~one of~~ a C-propeptide or an N-propeptide, the method comprising treating at least one of VEGF-C or VEGF-D with a candidate protease, and detecting VHD, wherein the detection of VHD indicates that the candidate protease is capable of activating VEGF-C or VEGF-D.

7. (currently amended) A method according to Claim 6 for screening for a protease that activates at least one of VEGF-C or VEGF-D, wherein the method uses ~~using~~ a synthetic peptide derived from VEGF-C or VEGF-D, and the method comprises ~~comprising~~ treating said synthetic peptide with a candidate protease, and detecting cleavage of the synthetic peptide ~~VEGF-C or VEGF-D~~ by said candidate protease using scintillation proximity assay.

8. (original) A method for identifying inhibitors of activation of at least one VEGF-C or VEGF-D, the method comprising admixing at least one of VEGF-C or VEGF-D with a candidate substance and plasmin, and measuring inhibition of release of VHD from the at least one of VEGF-C or VEGF-D.

9. (original) A method according to Claim 8, further comprising testing whether said candidate substance inhibits degradation of another substrate of plasmin other than VEGF-C or VEGF-D, whereby a substance that inhibits release of VHD by plasmin but not degradation of the other substrate indicates that said substance is an inhibitor of activation of VEGF-C or VEGF-D.

10. (currently amended) A method according to Claim 8 for screening for an inhibitor of plasmin activation of VEGF-C or VEGF-D, wherein the method uses ~~using~~ a synthetic peptide derived from said VEGF-C or VEGF-D, ~~the method comprising~~ and comprises treating said synthetic peptide with a candidate inhibitor and plasmin and detecting lack of cleavage of the peptide by plasmin in the presence of said candidate inhibitor using scintillation proximity assay.

11. (cancelled)

12. (cancelled)

13. (cancelled)

14. (original) A pharmaceutical composition for activating VEGF-C or VEGF-D or both, comprising an effective amount of plasmin and a pharmaceutically acceptable excipient.

15. (original) A method of treatment comprising administering an effective amount of the pharmaceutical composition of Claim 14 to a patient in need threreof.

16. (original) A pharmaceutical composition for inhibiting VEGF-C or VEGF-D, or both, comprising an inhibitor of VEGF-C or VEGF-D activation by plasmin, and a pharmaceutically acceptable excipient.

17. (currently amended) A method according to Claim 16 ~~15~~, wherein the inhibitor is an antibody or fragment thereof, wherein said antibody or fragment thereof binds to at least one of VEGF-D or VEGF-C, and wherein said antibody or fragment thereof blocks plasmin from activating at least one of VEGF-D or VEGF-C.